

13 November 1975

How Colby would revise CIA rules

By Robert P. Hay,
Staff correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

Congress is expected here to provide the Central Intelligence Agency with the broad reforms sought by Director William E. Colby to ensure that the agency operates both effectively and within the framework of the U.S. Constitution.

Congressional sources — both inside and outside committees now investigating the CIA — make clear that Congress itself seeks changes similar to Mr. Colby's, which he voiced for the first time at a Wednesday, Nov. 2 breakfast with reporters:

- Establish guidelines, through changes in existing law, of what the CIA "can do and what it can't do." Current law, says Mr. Colby, is so vague it lets the CIA do almost anything the National Security Council directs it to do.

A year ago Congress took the first step toward limiting the CIA's wide-ranging powers. It required all activities not involving intelligence gathering to be specifically approved by the President, who then had to inform relevant congressional committees.

- Specifically, Mr. Colby seeks resolution of conflict between a law which prohibits the CIA from undertaking domestic intelligence gathering, and one which requires the CIA's director to protect CIA intelligence and methods. This conflict, he says, "has raised some problems." Congressional sources ree.

- Director Colby specifically hopes Congress will settle the question of "the proper limit of a counterintelligence function" of the CIA: is it to operate both at home and abroad? Or only overseas?

- Better supervision of CIA activities, both



AP photo

Colby — will he get CIA reforms?

by Congress and the executive branch. In recent months many members of Congress have conceded that in the past they did not want to be informed of CIA activities. Similar allegations have been made that high officials of past presidential administrations took the same position. Supervision, in Mr. Colby's understated phrase, was "not very evident."

Republicans and Democrats in Congress say the Congress will keep closer supervision of the CIA now. Many in Congress want to establish a joint Senate-House committee. Others wish separate Senate and House groups to monitor closely the CIA and other intelligence gathering agencies, including the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Good external supervision by a proper committee of the Congress," says Mr. Colby, "will create better internal supervision [within the executive branch] and will ensure that the CIA operates as the government — and the nation — wishes it to."

- Make it illegal for persons in government charged with keeping secrets to disclose them to unauthorized persons, such as reporters. There now is no law providing punishment for domestic leaks and other disclosures of secrets, he said.

Such a provision is contained in a wide-ranging legal bill now before the Senate, generally referred to as S-1; Mr. Colby strongly supports this provision. He says the CIA has been harmed by disclosures of secrets — both from Congress and the executive branch — during the current investigations of the agency.

"What's really happening" with the current question of some past CIA actions, says Mr. Colby, "is we are bringing intelligence into our constitutional structure." He offers the same perspective several members of Congress do — that in the early 1950s the cold war atmosphere dominated the views Congress and the nation took of intelligence gathering — and that they consequently did not want to know about it.

Since Watergate, Mr. Colby points out, Americans and Congress "insist that our intelligence operations be conducted within the Constitution."